



News From Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis 31st Congressional District of California

1641 Longworth HOB | Washington, DC 20515 | 202.225.5464 | 202.225.5467 f.

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Contact: Edith Robles
(202) 225-5464
Cell- (202) 225-2167

SOLIS, MILLER AND CALIFORNIA CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS URGE GOVERNOR DAVIS TO SIGN THE FARMWORKER BILL

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Today, Congresswoman Hilda L. Solis (CA-31) and Congressman George Miller (CA-70), joined by 14 other California Members of Congress, sent a letter to California Governor Gray Davis, urging him to sign SB 1736 into law.

SB1736, introduced by Senator John Burton, provides for mediation and arbitration services for unions and growers after the Agricultural Labor Relations Board has issued an order to bargain in good faith.

"I urge Governor Davis to sign this bill that will bring economic justice and respect to those who grow and harvest the food that feed our families. Through the years, these workers have been denied the right to enter into union contracts that would improve their lives and those of their families," said Solis.

Following the historic campaign for farmworker rights led by César Chávez over two decades ago, the California state legislature enacted the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act. This measure gives California farmworkers the right to organize and bargain collectively after lawfully certified elections. Unfortunately, the majority of grower employers are disregarding the results of those elections. Hundreds of workers have waited years to receive the benefits of collective bargaining and hundreds still wait for that first contract.

The majority of farmworkers live in poverty, with an average pay of less than \$10,000 a year and with no benefits, they have no guarantees, few rights and little protection from the arbitrary acts of employers.

"This bill would be a victory for all farmworkers because it will create the foundation for a change in our labor laws giving them a place at the table to negotiate their rights," said Solis. "Justice is long overdue for farmworkers and this bill takes important steps toward granting workers the benefits and the respect they rightfully deserve."

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